



Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

Supervisor Patricia Jursik, District 8

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Jursik Says Shoreline Bill Washes Out Trustee Duty to Protect Public Access

The County Executive's support of the Shoreline Bill currently in the Legislature has demonstrated that he cares only about raw power politics, not trusteeship of the Lake Michigan shoreline. The ubiquitous Rep. Joseph Sanfelippo has sponsored this bill in Madison for one reason only: to trump the local voice and through pure political power to replace local representation. A trustee has fiduciary duties, and this bill replaces the State of Wisconsin for the County Board as trustee. Upon seizing the role of Trustee, the legislation also provides that no Department of Natural Resources report is to be made. Where is the protection of the Public Trust?

The 1913 shoreline boundary that is referred to by the County Executive is a line that represented a railroad and agreements made by the City of Milwaukee. At all times, this line was held either by public governmental bodies or by railroads. Railroads have nearly the same broad rights as Public Trust in order to further transportation. At no time did this line represent private ownership along the shoreline in question.

The issue of what can be transferred to private ownership for development should be determined in a factual hearing before a Circuit Court judge. The County Board has directed that this be done in a "clear title" law suit. Once private ownership is in place, public rights terminate. This is the question that we must care about. It is not done by jamming public legislation down the throat of the public even if done in the name of development.

Hopefully a bipartisan group of Senators will resist this bad legislation and permit the local trustee of public lands to resolve these issues along our lakefront. It is the local board that has shown it does care about trusteeship of our shoreline.

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